

## The Present Needs of the Negro

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President Selma University, Selma, Ala. At Clifton Conference,  
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I AM very anxious, and I am sure we are all very anxious, to have the past and the present condition of the negro placed plainly and truly before these Northern and Southern white friends, so that they may understand the situation just as it was and just as it is, — at least, from the Negro's standpoint, and I

desire to ask you to let me speak from my heart.



Pres. R. T. Pollard

In the address yesterday, delivered by Mr. Broughton, reference was made to the fact that during slavery there was no provision made for the Negro's education or religious training; but I want to call attention to one thing that I have found by actual inquiry and investigation, that there was a kind of training of the Negro during slavery. If you will observe that the preachers, the early Negro preachers and those who afterwards got ahead first and came to position of authority, were either house servants, overseers, or Negro drivers, or

somebody connected with and placed in a responsible position, you will see that he imbibed the idea of labor and a kind of training that he received because of that responsibility, and he went out to establish and organize these Negro churches.

### Negroes in Slavery Days

I have been to many of these men and said to them, "What did you do during slavery?" He says, "I drove my master's carriage to church and listened to the preacher." Another says he was a house servant. Another was a Negro driver, or something of that kind. They were placed in some responsible position. And now, friends, say what you can about the Negro, he was given places of responsibility, and it has made him have a hope for something in the future. They are now aspiring as they never would have aspired otherwise. You put upon them in slavery the obedience of law without the help to execute law.

My father was one of those Negro drivers. He is an old man now, ninety-five years of age. Soon after emancipation, he went out and commenced organizing associations. I have so little knowledge of slavery myself, that I can only remember a few things that took place during slavery. Very soon after

emancipation there were teachers, and even though they could not write they could teach a little and read a little. They couldn't write enough to write an intelligent letter. My father had a letter he wanted to have read, and he went to a man and worked for him one day and a half, to get him to read his letter, and he rejoiced that he had it done so cheaply.

The Negro was not prepared at the time of his emancipation to receive professional training. He did not have a professional mind. He had to be taught the simplest things in the simplest way. We should bless God that he has grown to be any kind of a man.

### God Made the Negro as He Was

Now in slavery, God made the Negro as he was. He was not, therefore, prepared for the white man's methods of worship, and the white man's methods of work, and so God led him in the way He had mapped out. I believe that it was God's method of teaching him, and since He could not teach him His word, He taught him what He could. I believe that through all these things God brought him to the place He had mapped out. I believe that God used the men of those days, used the servants and the drivers and all, to make leaders for the time He had set apart for their freedom.

### Tell the Good Things Negroes are Doing

We speak of reaching the unreached. And that is a problem, — to reach the unreached. I believe that the Negro understands the Negro best. He knows more about him than the white man. This unreached Negro is not at the churches, he is not at the evening meetings for study. In a meeting that means something for the uplifting of the race, he is not, and we can't get him any more than the white man can get him. He belongs in that meeting and should be there, but we can't get him there any more than you can. You say the Negro is ignorant and we must teach him. Yes, but along with that, we need to give attention to the problem of how to get the white people of this country to know the good things that the Negro is doing, as well as the bad things. The newspapers give an account of the bad things only, and there is no way under heaven, it seems, for him to know about the good things that the Negro is doing. They don't come into our churches, unless they come to preach. They do not come to our schools and other meetings, except for some definite purpose.

Ought it not to be known in this country that there are institutions of learning that the Negro is fostering out of his own pocket? You talk about interest in study. If there is any class of people who has an interest in education, it is the Negro. He has the wish within him. If you get the wish within him, you need not worry about it.